THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) and (b) Based on the analysis of satellite data captured by National Aeronautic and Space Administration (NASA), United States of America (USA), researchers have reported about winter-time pool of air polluting particles over the Indian sub-continent, particularly over Bihar. Pollution observed over Bihar does not solely originate from there, but could be due to transportation of pollution from western portions of the Ganges Valley. Additionally, the meteorology and topography surrounding Bihar favour trapping of pollution during winter. The pollution observed in Bihar during winter is attributable to burning of bio-fuels used during cooking and other domestic use, coal used by utilities and industries as well as vehicular pollution.

(c) and (d) The Central Pollution Control Board and State Pollution Control Board have initiated steps including action plans to control air pollution from various sources like vehicles, industries, domestic fuel burning etc.

Facility of GIS and GPS to forestry

514. SHRI URKHAO GWRA BRAHMA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the forestry of our country have the facility of Geographical Information System (GIS) and Global Positioning System (GPS);

(b) if so, the details thereof, State-wise and area-wise; and

(c) the steps, if any, to establish more number of GIS and GPS in the country's forestry?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Number of States and Union Territory have been provided funds by the Central Government under Integrated Forests Protection Scheme for GIS and GPS. These are Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Uttaranchal, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Orissa, Maharashtra, Punjab, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, and Union Territory of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

(c) Central assistance is also being provided to the remaining States

and Union Territories on the basis of their requirment projected in annual work programme proposal under the Integrated Forest Protection Scheme.

Comparative forest figures

515. SHRI PYARIMOHAN MOHAPATRA: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) the comparative forest figure, State-wise in 1950, 1980 and 2000;

(b) whether it is a fact that the rate of depletion has been higher in case of economically more advanced States; and

(c) if so, whether Government would consider a more liberal approach such as accounting degraded forest land for compensatory afforestation in granting clearance for projects in backward States where rate of depletion has been lower?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI NAMO NARAIN MEENA): (a) Forest Survey of India has been assessing forest cover of the country biennially since 1987 using satellite data. The forest cover figures as per the first State of Forest Report 1987 and the latest 2001 are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

However, even for projects in backward States compensatory afforestation is to be raised on degraded forest land, twice in extent to the area being diverted in case of Central sector projects. In other cases involving diversion of forest land, the compensatory afforestation is required to be done on equivalent non-forest-land. In case of non-availability of such non-forest land in the entire State, the compensatory afforestation may be done over degraded forest land, double in extent to the area being diverted subject to a certificate from the chief secretary of the State/UT about the non-availability of non-forest land for the purpose.